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ABSTRACT

A study was done of novice teachers in California's public education system to examine how well they function in the language diverse metropolitan classrooms. Fall and Spring surveys were administered to 1,368 new teachers, and Spring surveys were administered to the directors of induction projects in which the new teachers participated. Findings confirm the gap that exists between the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the new teachers and that of their students. The new teachers were less diverse than the students they teach, and very few of the teachers held teaching credentials or certificates that qualified them to teach in language-diverse classrooms. Although most of the teachers had had some preservice and college training relating to teaching in diverse classrooms, only a few rated that training has prepared them well for such assignments. The teachers reported that training did not focus on specific instructional strategies. Training during the initial teaching years focused on five key areas: (1) understanding and use of students' native language; (2) promoting students' English language development; (3) adapting curriculum and instruction to meet diverse students' needs; (4) promoting student interaction; and (5) conducting outreach to students' parents. Included are five tables and 14 references. (JB)

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New Teachers in California's Language-diverse Metropolitan Classrooms: Findings From An Initial Study

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October 1991

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Introduction

The number of minority children within the Western region's metropolitan areas continues to mushroom. Yet the region, which includes Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah, has fewer minority teachers than it did 10 years ago (Kopetman, 1989). Increasingly the region's predominantly Anglo teachers work in majority-minority school districts where the number of limited English proficiency (LEP) students is growing. In some of these districts, the shortage of teachers who have the language skills and training needed to teach the region's rapidly growing numbers of language-minority students has reached critical proportions ("12,000 Teacher Short," 1991). To make matters worse, minority enrollment in the region's teacher-training institutions is down and the number of bilingual certificates issued is decreasing in especially high-need states such as California (Pappa, 1989; Sidener, 1991; Guthrie et al., 1991).

The instructional challenges of educating language-minority and LEP students are made more complex by their heterogeneity—the number of different native languages, and social, cultural, and educational experiences those students bring to school. For example, a recent national study conducted by Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) of nine locales that represented a cross section of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations showed that, on average, classrooms are comprised of students from five non-English language backgrounds, with a range across classrooms of 1 to 10 languages. Most often, classes included students who spoke three, four, or six languages (Tikunoff & Ward, 1991).

While there is widespread agreement that more must be done to recruit minority and bilingual teachers, the region's teachers will not, at least in the near future, begin to resemble the linguistic, racial, and cultural diversity of their students. The teachers will remain primarily Anglo, and only a limited number will speak a language other than English.

This report focuses on the latest entries in the imbalance between the racial, cultural, and ethnolinguistic composition of the region's student population and its teacher workforce: novice teachers in California, the region's and nation's most racially diverse state (Fullwood, 1991). In response to unprecedented enrollment increases, a substantial portion (25%) of California's teachers have five or fewer years of full-time teaching

experience. Like the state's more experienced teachers, California's new teachers are predominantly Anglo (Guthrie et al., 1991).

Helping predominantly Anglo new teachers in the region function successfully in language-diverse classrooms is one of the goals of SWRL's Metropolitan Educational Trends and Research Outcomes (METRO) Center. Over the next few years, the Center will develop approaches for supporting new teachers in metropolitan districts so they and their students are successful.

As a first step in this work, during the 1990-91 school year the Center gathered data on the kinds of support provided to a sample of first-and second-year teachers in 81 California metropolitan school districts. A metropolitan district was defined as any district located within a U.S. Census-designated standard metropolitan statistical area, an urbanized area with at least 50,000 people. All the districts in the sample participated in a specially funded, statewide new teacher induction program, the California New Teacher Project. That program supported approximately 40 pilot projects that operated in the districts.

Information from this initial investigation will provide a basis for the next step in the Center's work: generating questions for metropolitan school districts throughout the region about the support they provide new teachers to prepare them to work in language-diverse classrooms. This report presents initial findings and outlines the Center's future research plans.

In this first study, SWRL administered fall and spring surveys to the new teachers and spring surveys to the directors of the induction projects in which the new teachers participated. The surveys obtained information related to teaching diverse students from (a) the new teachers, (b) the pilot projects, and (c) through the projects. metropolitan school districts.

New Teacher and Student Profiles

The new teachers in the 81 metropolitan districts in SWRL's sample were less ethnically and lingually diverse than their students. In addition to providing basic demographic data about themselves and information about their professional certification, the new teachers reported on the percentage of their LEP students, the ethnic distribution of their students, and the languages they spoke other than English. The new teachers also rated the extent to which their college training had: (a) covered issues related to teaching students from a

variety of cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds; and (b) had prepared them to teach diverse students.

The new teachers' racial and ethnic membership was similar to that of teachers statewide. Eighty percent were Anglo compared to 82% of all teachers in California.[1] As Table 1 shows, the largest percentage of non-Anglo new teachers were Hispanic (10%). The remaining new teachers were Asian/Pacific Islanders (5%), African Americans (4%), Native Americans (1%), and others (less than 1%).[2]

In contrast, the new teachers' students were predominantly minority. Across the sample, the average new teachers' classroom included 39% Anglo students and 61% minority students. Minority student enrollment included 34% Hispanics, 13% Asian/Pacific Islanders, 13% African Americans, and approximately 1% Native Americans. The districts, due to their metropolitan nature, included a slightly higher percentage of minority students than is true for the state as a whole.[3]

When asked to indicate if they were qualified to teach LEP students based on their area of certification, very few (6%; $n = 71$) of the new teachers indicated they held bilingual credentials. Only 9% ($n = 96$) said they had any other kind of related certificate credential, such as a language development specialist credential. And few (18%; $n = 175$) said they were currently enrolled in a program leading to such a credential. However, more than one third of the new teachers (39%; $n = 275$) said they planned to enroll in such a program.

These figures are striking when one considers the high percentage of the new teachers (78%; $n = 978$) who reported they taught LEP students. The high percentage of LEP students in the new teachers' classrooms mirrors a statewide increase. Between 1985 and

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[1] For the state as a whole, Hispanics constitute slightly more than 7% (7.2%) of the teaching force, African Americans make up 5.7%, and Asians, 3.4%.

[2] The highest proportion of minority teachers were located in the state's most traditionally highly populated minority and diverse communities (San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Oakland), as well as in communities with rapidly increasing minority populations (Long Beach, Fresno, and Sacramento). When compared to first-year teachers hired in California in 1989, a slightly higher proportion of the new teachers in SWRL's sample were Hispanic. According to the California Department of Education, the state hired 11,556 novice teachers in 1989. They were predominantly Anglo (81.5%). The minority teachers were: African American (3.9%), Hispanic (5.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.8%), Indian/Alaskan (.7%), and other (4.4%). (*1990-91 Fact sheet: Back to school information*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, Public Relations Office.)

[3] As of 1989-90, California's students were Anglo (74.2%), Hispanic (33%), Asian/Pacific Islander (10.5%), African American (8.6%), and Native American (.8%).

Table 1
New Teachers' Characteristics, Credentials, Teaching Level, and Experience

Characteristics	*n*	*(%)*
Gender		
Female	1,078	79
Male	290	21
Ethnicity		
Anglo	1,087	80
Asian/Pacific Islander	62	5
African American	56	4
Hispanic	142	10
Native American	9	1
Other	7	<1
Teaching level		
Elementary	964	70
Secondary	411	30
Type of credential/permit		
Multiple subject/standard elementary	965	73
Multiple subject, bilingual	68	5
Services/specialist	27	2
Single subject/standard secondary	361	28
Single subject, bilingual	3	<1
Emergency	133	9
Other	70	5
Years prior teaching experience		
0	958	71
1	340	25
2	30	2
3 or more	32	2

1990, the number of LEP students grew nearly four times as fast as the general enrollment population. California's LEP student population is equal to the total enrollments of 37 other states (Guthrie et al., 1991). In addition, the highest incidence of LEP students occurs in the elementary grades. Seventy percent of the new teachers taught at the elementary level.

To determine the proportion of new teachers' LEP students, SWRL asked the new teachers to indicate how many students they taught in 1990-91 and of these, how many were LEP. For each teacher, SWRL calculated the percentage of LEP students. As Table

2 illustrates, the greatest proportion—about half—taught in classrooms with a maximum of 15% LEP students or about 4 students in a class of 30 students. Twenty percent of the new teachers taught classes where more than half of the students were LEP. Ten percent taught classes where more than 75% of the students were LEP. On the average, 25% (*SD* = 29) of the new teachers' students were LEP.

Table 2
Percentage of LEP Students in the New Teachers' Classrooms

Percent LEP	*n*	%
Less than 5	361	33
5 to less than 15	225	21
15 to less than 25	123	11
25 to less than 35	89	8
35 to less than 45	54	5
45 to less than 55	51	5
55 to less than 65	37	3
65 to less than 75	38	4
75 to less than 85	29	3
85 to less than 95	23	2
95 to 100	53	5

SWRL also inquired about the languages spoken by the new teachers' students (see Table 3). Many new teachers taught classes in which students spoke one (41%) or two (22%) languages other than English. Interestingly, 12% taught in classrooms where at least five non-English languages were spoken.

The new teachers' students spoke a variety of languages other than English, with Spanish dominating. Sixty-seven percent of the new teachers reported that up to 20% of their students spoke Spanish. Other languages spoken in the the new teachers' classrooms in decreasing order were: Vietnamese, Filipino, Cambodian, Laos, Korean, Cantonese, Japanese, and Mandarin. The language diversity in the new teachers' classrooms mirror the overall makeup of the state's population. Currently, 1 in 4 Californians is Hispanic and 1 in 10 is Asian (Clifford & Roark, 1991).

Table 3
Number of Languages Spoken by Students in the New Teachers' Classrooms

Number of Languages	*n*	%
1	408	41
2	217	22
3	150	15
4	104	10
5 or more	124	12

Although their students frequently spoke a language other than English, only 26% (n = 288) of the new teachers said they were sufficiently fluent in a language other then English to provide instruction in that language. When asked to asses their fluency in a second language, only 40% (n = 82) rated themselves as extremely fluent. Most of the new teachers listed Spanish, the most common language other than English their students spoke, as the language in which they provided instruction.

Preservice and College Training Related to Teaching Diverse Students

One of the concerns undergirding the METRO Center's work is that new teachers are inadequately prepared to teach their linguistic-diverse students. In characterizing the challenges faced by teachers of diverse students, Tikunoff & Ward (1991) observe that "anyone who enters a classroom comprised of students from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds comes away sensitized to, if not overwhelmed by, the range of learning abilities, needs, languages, and approaches to learning. . ." (p. 3). They paint the following picture of how diverse a new teacher's classroom may be. A diverse classroom may include the following students.

- Anglo students from English-speaking cultural backgrounds
- Students from homes in which English is not the first language

  In some groups, all or most of these students may speak the same first language (e.g., Spanish). In others, a variety of first languages may be represented. Some students may be sufficiently proficient in English to converse socially, but may or may not be proficient enough to pursue learning in the academic content areas without special adaptations and adjustments in instruction. Others may have very

limited, or no, English language skills. Some students may be from families that, although they typically speak a language other than English in the home, have resided in the United States for several years and use English for some communication in the home as well as in the large community. Some students may be from families in which the students only speak and understand English at any level of proficiency.

- Students who may have recently arrived in the United States

  Some may be refugees who have experienced interrupted schooling or had little, if any, informal schooling. Others may have attended schools much like those they entered upon coming to the United States. Some students may be from upper middle-class families, some from middle-class families, and many from poor families. In older student groups, some students may be in the United States entirely on their own and, therefore, work while attending school.

While teacher preparation programs are gradually being revamped in light of changing student demographics, historically, they have prepared teachers to work with one socioeconomic group (e.g., middle class) and one culture, the dominant culture (Larke, 1990). Thus it is not surprising that teachers in California have been largely critical of training programs for failing to focus adequately on the challenges and issues of diverse classrooms (Olsen & Mullen, 1990). The new teachers in SWRL's sample were more positive about the adequacy of the preservice and college training. However, they reported that the training they received focused less on specific instructional strategies appropriate for language-diverse classrooms and more on general cultural and linguistic sensitivity.

About three quarters (78%) of the new teachers (n = 848) said their preservice and college training covered issues related to teaching culturally and/or linguistically diverse students. But only 4% (n = 26) thought the training they had received had prepared them very well. On a nine-point scale (where 1 refers to "not at all" and 9 refers to "extensively"), 70% (n = 497) assigned ratings of 4 through 7, suggesting they believed that their preservice/college training had equipped them moderately well for language-diverse classrooms. New teachers also reported on the content addressed in the training in response to the content options listed in Table 4.

When asked to rate the degree to which training centered on these strategies, the new teachers assigned the highest mean rating to "being sensitive to different cultural and linguistic values and activities." The lowest mean rating was assigned to "designing lessons so that students acquired English language skills during content instruction." Approximately 80% of the new teachers in the sample were graduates of teacher preparation programs. Of these, two thirds received their professional preparation in California.

Table 4
New Teachers' Ratings of Training for Language-diverse Classrooms

Areas	*M*	*SD*
Being sensitive to different cultural and linguistic values and activities	7.07	1.90
Using visuals and manipulatives when teaching	6.34	2.25
Using oral recitation and discussion to foster language development	5.50	2.39
Assigning students who are more English proficient to work with/help less proficient students	5.27	2.33
Designing lessons so students can acquire English language skills during content instruction	4.70	2.35

Note. Results are based on a 1 to 9 scale, where 1 refers to "not at all" and 9 refers to "extensively."

Inservice and Induction Training Related to Teaching Diverse Students

As Tikunoff (1990) has suggested, effective instruction of ethnolinguistically diverse students requires teachers to integrate content knowledge acquisition and English language development. That is, teachers must not only use instructional practices that will increase students' academic performance, but the teachers' knowledge, abilities, and activities must also meet diverse students' particular learning needs.

Research indicates that LEP students experience academic success and develop high English proficiency skills when three conditions are met. First, schools must reinforce students' cultural identities. Second, schools must promote the development of the communicative proficiency students bring to school through bilingual instruction. Third, schools must make instruction in English comprehensible by embedding it in a context that is meaningful to students (Cummins, 1984).

SWRL focused its initial study on teacher knowledge and practices in five key areas: (a) understanding and using students' native language; (b) promoting students' English language development; (c) adapting curriculum and instruction to meet diverse students'

needs; (d) promoting student interaction; and (e) outreach to students' parents. Teachers' knowledge, skills, understanding, and activities in each area are listed below.

- Understanding and using students' native language

  How students acquire their native language and implications for English acquisition and instruction

  How to assess students' language proficiency in their native language and in English to determine which language to use in instruction

  How to develop literacy skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in the students' native language

- Promoting students' English language development

  How to develop literacy skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in English for LEP students

  How to provide English language development support for LEP students who have exited from special language development programs (e.g., bilingual education, English to Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL])

- Adapting curriculum and instruction to meet diverse students' needs

  How to modify curriculum and instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students

  How to use culturally appropriate techniques, such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring

  How to obtain and use information about the students' culture and learning style so that the curriculum, instruction, and teaching behaviors are more appropriate and effective

  How to train and work with people who are instructional aides to address curriculum and instructional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students

- Promoting student interaction

  How to promote self-esteem and positive social relations among students from diverse backgrounds

  How to train and use students who are more English proficient to work with students who are less English proficient

- Outreach to students' parents

  How to relate to parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students and coordinate home and school learning

The directors of the teacher induction projects were asked to indicate which of the topics listed above were addressed in project -and/or district-provided new teacher training sessions. In most cases, in addition to directing a new teacher project, the project directors were district directors of staff development or other district-level administrators. Their responses are arrayed in Table 5.

According to the directors, new teachers were most often provided with training related to two concerns in school districts: assessment for appropriate instructional placement and parental involvement. Eighty percent of the directors said both the teacher induction project and the school district provided training in assessing students' language proficiency to determine the most appropriate language to use in instruction. Seventy percent reported that training focused on relating to diverse students' parents and coordinating home and school learning.

In addition, training commonly focused on two strategies one would expect, given the new teachers' limited second-language facility and lack of credentials that qualified them to teach in language-diverse classrooms. The first was working with instructional aides who may have been bilingual. The second was teacher training sessions, which dealt with how to use information about students' culture and learning styles to tailor the curriculum, instruction, and teachers' classroom behaviors appropriately.

These data also provide a sense of the relative emphasis the teacher induction projects and the school districts placed on the various training topics. The directors reported that the district-provided training focused most on: (a) assessing students' language proficiency; (b) working with instructional aides; (c) relating to parents; (d) developing literacy skills in the students' native language; and (e) supporting further English language development of students who had exited from bilingual education.

The new teacher induction projects tended to augment this with additional training related to promoting diverse students' self-esteem and social relations, using culturally appropriate techniques, such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring, and strategies for modifying the curriculum in language-diverse classrooms.

Table 5
Topics Related to Teaching Diverse Students Addressed in Project and/or District Training

Topics	District (%)	Project (%)	Both (%)
How students acquire their native language and implications for English acquisition and instruction	40	23	63
How to assess students' language proficiency in their native language and in English to determine which language to use in instruction	67	13	80
How to develop literacy skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in the students' native language	40	20	60
How to develop literacy skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in English for LEP students	33	23	56
How to provide English language development support for LEP students who have exited from special language development programs (e.g., bilingual education, ESOL)	40	23	63
How to modify curriculum and instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students	20	37	57
How to use culturally appropriate techniques, such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring	13	37	50
How to obtain and use information about the students' culture and learning style so that the curriculum, instruction, and teaching behaviors are more appropriate and effective	33	33	66
How to train and work with people who are instructional aides to address curriculum and instructional needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students	50	17	67
How to promote self-esteem and positive social relations among students from diverse backgrounds	13	47	60
How to train and use students who are more English proficient to work with students who are less English proficient	37	17	54
How to relate to parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students and coordinate home and school learning	47	23	70

Summary and Next Steps

To meet their increasing needs, school districts throughout California, Arizona, and to some extent Nevada and Utah, are initiating efforts that provide their new teachers with additional support and training related to teaching in language-diverse classrooms. Using the findings from this initial study as a guide, the Center will expand its efforts in 1992. First, data collection will extend to other states in the region. Second, in addition to seeking information about training provided to new teachers, the Center will focus on the structures and processes that metropolitan school districts, which have diverse student populations, implement to provide new teachers with support and assistance from experienced teachers.

Previous SWRL studies have documented the important role highly effective experienced teachers who function as on-site mentors or buddy teachers play in the successful induction experience (Ward & Dianda, 1989; Dianda et al., 1990; Ward et al., 1991). This assistance is most relevant and useful when the new and experienced teachers are matched one-on-one by school, grade level and/or subject area, and if possible, teaching philosophy. In particular, the Center will gather information on the expertise in instructing diverse students that experienced teachers bring to their support role.

The study reported here furnished information about training provided to a sample of new teachers in California. The study also provided information on how that training related to their teaching assignments and qualifications to teach language-diverse students by virtue of the teachers' area of certification, their own facility to speak a second language, and their preservice/college training.

Findings confirm the gap that exists between the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the new teachers and their students. The new teachers were much less diverse than the students they teach. In addition, very few new teachers held teaching credentials or certificates that qualified them to teach in language-diverse classrooms. And while most indicated their preservice and college training had addressed issues related to teaching in diverse classrooms, only a small percentage indicated this training has prepared them extremely well for such assignments.

The new teachers reported that their preservice and college training focused more on general cultural and linguistic sensitivity and less on specific instructional strategies that are

appropriate for language-diverse classrooms (e.g., using visuals and manipulatives while teaching; using oral recitation and discussion to foster language development). Training during their initial teaching years focused on teacher knowledge and practices in five key areas: (a) understanding and use of students' native language; (b) promoting students' English language development; (c) adapting curriculum and instruction to meet diverse students' needs; (d) promoting student interaction; and (e) outreach to students' parents.

Three key research questions undergird the Centers' future work. First, is the content of training and the focus of support provided to new teachers assigned to the region's metropolitan schools serving diverse students appropriate to the new teachers' needs? Second, does the assistance help them apply relevant knowledge and skills to the instruction of students in language-diverse classrooms? Third, how are training and support delivered to new teachers in metropolitan districts, particularly those that have experienced enrollment growth among language-diverse students?

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